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Claim 1 recites a "method of decreasing the playing duration of speech generated from a text segment, comprising: (a) counting syllables in each word of said text segment; and (b) assigning a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on a total number of syllables in said word." [Emphasis added] Claims 18 and 24 are computing device and computer readable medium claims, respectively, which correspond with claim 1.

In contrast, Kosaka et al. recite, *inter alia*, the changing of a ratio of vowel period length (V) to consonant period length (C) within a single mora (short syllable) based on mora length and an operative speech utterance speed (col. 9 lines 12-26). Kosaka et al. also recite syllable-by-syllable adjustment of a speech segment utterance speed through the interpretation of mora pitch control marks (e.g. "+", "-") between syllables to adjust "syllable beat point pitch" (col. 21 line 49 – col. 22 line 30). Accordingly, the syllable-specific adjustments of Kosaka et al. do not provide each and every element of applicant's claimed invention. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 1, 18 and 24 are not in fact anticipated by Kosaka et al.

The Examiner further rejected independent claims 6, 20 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,396,577 to Oikawa et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,146,405 to Church. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim

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limitations. MPEP § 2143.

It is respectfully submitted that there is no suggestion or motivation for the combination of Oikawa et al. and Church to achieve the claimed invention.

Oikawa et al. recites an apparatus capable of generating speech from text at various "reading speeds", with increased speeds being achieved by skipping words with a lesser degree of importance (see Abstract; col. 4, ll. 12-31; Table 1).

In contrast, Church recites methods for determining parts of speech of words in text (Abstract). Church suggests that parts-of-speech analysis is necessary in speech synthesis to produce a result that sounds like human speech (col. 1, ll. 22-24).

Because the objective of producing speech that sounds like human speech is inapposite to the goal of generating speech from text with an increased reading speed by optionally skipping words, Applicant submits that there is no suggestion or motivation to combine the two references to achieve the claimed invention. Accordingly, it is submitted that claims 6, 20 and 26 are in fact patentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

The Examiner also rejected independent claims 13, 22 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Oikawa et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,924,068 to Richard et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection, on the grounds that the cited references do not teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

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Claim 13 recites a "method of decreasing the playing duration of speech generated from a text segment, comprising: (a) comparing each word of said text segment to an inventory of pre-selected words; and (b) assigning a playing rate indicator to said each word of said text segment based on said comparison." Claims 22 and 28 are computing device and computer readable medium claims, respectively, which correspond with claim 13.

The Examiner suggests that while Oikawa et al. "do not specify that the categorization of the determined degree of importance is based on an inventory of pre-selected words", Richard et al. teach a text-to-speech synthesis system which implements a dictionary to provide syntactic and semantic prosody. The Examiner further suggests that Richard et al. also allows users to provide keywords which determines what information is synthesized and allows users to vary the rate at which the information is read. The Examiner's position appears to be that Richard et al. teach the assignment of a playing rate indicator to each word based on a comparison to an inventory of pre-selected words. Applicant traverses this suggestion. The use of a dictionary in Richard et al. is for determining part-of-speech information or word pronunciation (col. 13 lines 21-24, lines 61-64). There is no suggestion that inclusion in the dictionary will have any effect on a word's playing rate nor cause a playing rate indicator of any kind to be assigned. Moreover, it should be emphasized that the adjustable rate of news article reading recited by Richard et al. (Abstract; col. 19 lines 9-12) is an overall rate equally applicable to each uttered word, as opposed to a word-specific rate. As indicated at page 2, lines 4-10 of the instant application, such uniform acceleration of both important and insignificant words is disadvantageous in that it may negatively impact on the user's ability to comprehend important words. Thus it is submitted that claims 13, 22 and 28 do in fact patentably distinguish over Oikawa et al. and Richard et al.

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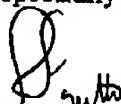
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Additionally, in combining the cited references, the Examiner has indicated that, e.g., "it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the speech synthesis system of Kosaka et al. to implement modifying the duration of pauses associated with punctuation in a text segment ..." (See Paper 4, paragraph 8; see also paragraphs 10, 11, 13 and 14). The level of skill in the art, however, cannot be relied upon to provide the suggestion to combine references to satisfy *prima facie* obviousness requirements. MPEP §2143.01.

Given that the independent claims distinguish over the cited art, the remaining claims, which depend from the independent claims, also distinguish over the art of record.

In view of the foregoing, early favorable consideration of this application is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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